



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Grand Valley Ranger District

1010 Kimball Ave.
Grand Junction, CO 81501
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Fax: 970-263-5819

Date: December 2, 2021

REPLY DUE JANUARY 3, 2022

Greetings,

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests Grand Valley Ranger District is inviting comments on the Cow Creek Habitat Improvement project. This project proposes to apply prescribed fire to approximately 15,000 acres on the northern end of the Uncompahgre Plateau (refer to attached map).

The purpose of the proposed Cow Creek Habitat Improvement project is to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire while providing forage for wildlife and livestock. The need for this project is to create a mosaic of habitats and fuel types that provide both fuel breaks in the event of a fire, and forage for wildlife and livestock. This action is intended to maintain and enhance productive vegetation for the benefit of Mule Deer, Elk and other wildlife species, while reducing the natural buildup of fuels.

The proposed action is to treat approximately 15,000 acres with prescribed fire. Current conditions are overgrown vegetation leading to increased potential for catastrophic wildfire and decreased accessibility for big game and livestock. This project is designed to reduce the risk of wildfire and enhance foraging opportunities for wildlife in an Oak Brush and Mountain Shrub vegetation community. Prescribed fire will be performed primarily by aerial ignitions with areas of hand lighting. Aerial ignitions will be accomplished with a helicopter or UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System). Hand ignitions (e.g., drip torches, fusee) will be performed in areas near (but not limited to) control lines. About 180 acres of BLM land are included in the treatment units. Active ignitions would not occur in this area but backing fire would be allowed in order to utilize an existing control line (Forest Service Road 405).

Project activities are estimated to be initiated in the Spring or Fall of 2022. Because prescribed burning requires specific weather conditions, the action may be postponed if necessary.

For additional information or to submit comments, please contact Heidi Plank, Wildlife Biologist at Heidi.plank@usda.gov or 970-263-5828. Comments may also be mailed to the Grand Valley Ranger District, Attention: Cow Creek Habitat Improvement, Grand Valley District Office 1010 Kimball Ave. Grand Junction, CO 81501. To be most helpful in finalizing analysis, please submit any comments by January 3, 2022.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM A. EDWARDS
District Ranger

Enclosure: Cow Creek Habitat Improvement Map



Cow Creek habitat improvement project

